westwords

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MSMC

WESTWORDS

Volume 7 Number 2

January 1965

Published quarterly by the students
of Mount St. Mary's College
Los Angeles, California

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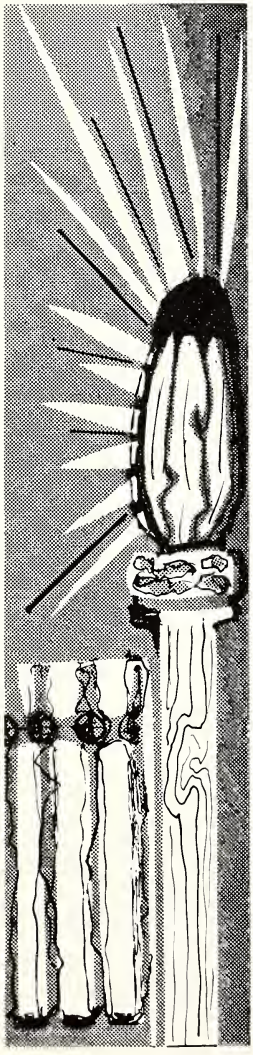
An Advent Lamp

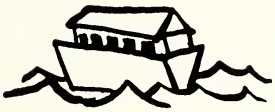


The lamp base rest its earthen weight
Upon the post that marks our gate.
Chilled emptiness seems to invite
A flame to bring it warmth and light.
And while it waits, so firmly fixed,
Its longing to be filled is mixed
With readiness to serve.

O come and set this clay alight!
Illuminate earthware tonight
With your own life, here self-consumed,
And by this man made hearth entombed.
For you can rise and soar erect,
Aglow with radiance we expect
To overwhelm our dark.

SISTER PATRICK MARIE, CSJ

Ararat, Here We Come!



JANICE DECARLO

"Noah, we've been in this leaky contraption for forty days now, and I'm getting sick and tired of it. My rheumatism isn't getting any better, you know. By the way, I asked you last week to fix that leak in our bedroom. Why, what with this incessant rain for five weeks and the wind and thunder you'd think that would be enough torture for a poor old woman, but no--you'd rather see me go stark raving mad listening to that monotdrip at night and then have my legs cramp up on me with the dampness. Why my rheumatism is so bad I can hardly... "

"Yes dear, I'll fix it in a minute--as soon as I feed this dove. "

"Oh you and your animals! That's another thing, Noah! You just absolutely must do something about the ventilation. Why yesterday I thought I'd faint, the stench was so horrible. And the noise! I haven't had a moment's peace! The water buffalo are bellowing because the camels keep screeching at the peacocks. It's all the fault of that stupid lion... "

"You mean Nebuchednezzer, dear? "

"Yes, that stupid lion keeps terrorizing all the other animals. Thinks he's king or something...and the gazelles... "

"He is king, dear, " Noah said matter-of-factly. "Yahweh gave him dominion over the animal family just as he gave me dominion over mine."

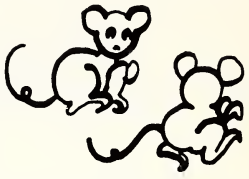
"Mrs. Noah eyed her husband. "Just what do you mean by that remark! "

"Just what I said, dear: I'll wear the robes in this family, and I'll patch the leak when I feel like it, and Sem, Ham, and Japheth will take care of the animals. Right now I've got more important things to do. It's time to send out the dove. Off you go now, and please come back with a branch! "

"Oh Noah! Don't! We lost our raven last week, and now that lovely dove... " Mrs. Noah sat down on a large, fluffy, sheepskin pillow and fumed. That man! How can I endure this? I didn't want to come anyway. How cruel to make me leave my lovely tent, just when I finally got it decorated the way I wanted it. Sometimes I wonder who Yahweh's punishing. It's so exasperating to be cooped up like this. I can't wait until we are settled again and get back to our old routine. Then he can go out into the fields with his sheep and and talk to Yahweh all he wants while I start all over again in the tent. I'll never get it the way I had it: red, purple and yellow Arabian-striped walls with vermillion sheepskin rugs and pink camel hair pillows. I was supposed to have the next meeting of the Garden of Eden sewing circle at my house too. The girls would have just loved my new earthenware tea set!

"Father Noah! Mother Noah! Come quick!" screamed Ham's wife as she darted into the room. "The mice are loose! I told Ham not to fool around with those--ugh!--creatures, but he likes to pet them and now they're loose!"

"Calm down, daughter!" Noah led her to the family dinner table and sat her down. "There's no problem. We can certainly find two mice in the ark. There aren't too many places they can go."



"No problem! But Father Noah, you don't understand. There have been a few additions since you last checked them. There are fifteen mice loose in this ark and I'm going crazy!" With that she gathered her skirts about her and scrambled onto the table. "I'm staying right up here until Ham finds every last one of those rodents!"

"I agree with you, dear. I was just telling Father Noah he should take better care of those animals. They're just getting completely out of hand--Eeeeeeeeek! I see one! Move over, I'm coming up!"

"No dear, you'll break the table. It took me five days to make it according to Yahweh's instructions." Too late! Mrs. Noah had already managed to lift herself to the tabletop. There she and her daughter-in law joined each other in their lamentations, covering their faces with their veils and peeking through them to keep track of the mice. When Ham entered the room, the table was creaking under its burden.

Noah, running up and down the room, wailed to his son: "My table! My table! Ham! Do something! Get them down!"

"Leave them there, Father Noah, they'll be out of the way. We've got a problem on our hands."

"Yes, I know, my son. Why are women so afraid of such a harmless pet as a mouse?"

"No Father, we've got a much bigger problem. The kangaroos were restless and jumped on the gates and broke loose. One of them jumped on Sem--I think his arm is broken--anyway, when he fell under the kangaroos he knocked open the gates of the rabbit stall. Now the ark's really hoppin'!"

"Oh merciful heavens!" ejaculated Noah. "We have a catastrophe on our hands! We'd better go get Sem before something else tramples on him."

"It's all right, Father. Japheth is with him and is taking care of his arm."

"Fine then, get the ropes and nets, and let's get to work. Where are my other daughters?"

"They've locked themselves in the grain closet, Father. We won't have to worry about them for a while."

"Good! These silly women are always complicating the issue. Let's get to work."

Just as they started toward the storeroom for the equipment Sem and Japheth staggered into the room. Sem had his arm in a fluorescent orange bandana sling, and both he and his brother were soaking wet.

"Praise to Yahweh! What happened now?"

"Father," Sem panted, "while Japheth was bandaging my arm the kangaroos came after me again. We both ran like desert rats and didn't watch where we were going. We landed in the aquarium."

"F-F-Father, m-may I sp-sp-speak?" Japheth chattered through his

teeth.

"No! " shouted Mrs. Noah from her tabletop eminence. "Both of you go immediately to your rooms and change into something dry and warm. Why, you'll catch your death of pneumonia and end up with rheumatism like your poor mother! "

"B-B-But Father, I think Sem upset the bug boxes when he ran into the aquarium. "

"Didn't I tell you boys to put those bugs on the highest shelf you you could find? Whose job was it supposed to be? "

"It was mine, " Ham meekly confessed. "I was on my way to do it Father, but I just stopped for a minute to pet the mice. I really meant to do it! "

"That does us a lot of good now, Ham. We'll just have to break out the poison powder. "

As the men started to leave the room, Mrs. Noah burst out in exclamation. "The dove! Father Noah, the dove has returned! Well, it's about time. I don't think we could survive another week in this...Oh look! He has a branch in his mouth! A beautiful, leafy olive branch! "

"Land ho! " hollered Ham.

"The holocausts! " remembered Noah. "Sem, have you kept them prepared? "

"The goat and the bull are ready, Father. "

"No lamb? "

"About those lambs, Father. The strangest thing has happened everytime we send a bird out of the ark: all the lambs disappear. I can't understand it! "

"Oh no! Don't tell me we're going to go through this again! " moaned Noah. "O.K. Ham, where's the lamb? "

"Awh, Father Noah, I just can't let Sem kill those poor, little lambs. They're so soft and ... "

"We haven't got time to argue, Ham. Yahweh will be expecting to hear from us soon. All right everyone--get to work! "

When the ark finally did land on Mount Ararat, the family climbed wearily out of the boat and breathed the fresh air. After temporary shelters were built for his family and flocks, Noah offered his sacrifices.

Yahweh was pleased with the odor of Noah's offering, despite the missing lamb, and He said to him:

"Noah! I am well pleased with you and your family. I trust you had a pleasant cruise? "

"Well, Yahweh, it was a bit trying, but we're glad to be safe and sound back on the ground again. "

"I'm sure you are, Noah, " said Yahweh. "Well, you better get busy and set up housekeeping again. The land is yours--take good care of it. By the way, Noah, did the animals give you any trouble? "

A Silent Quality

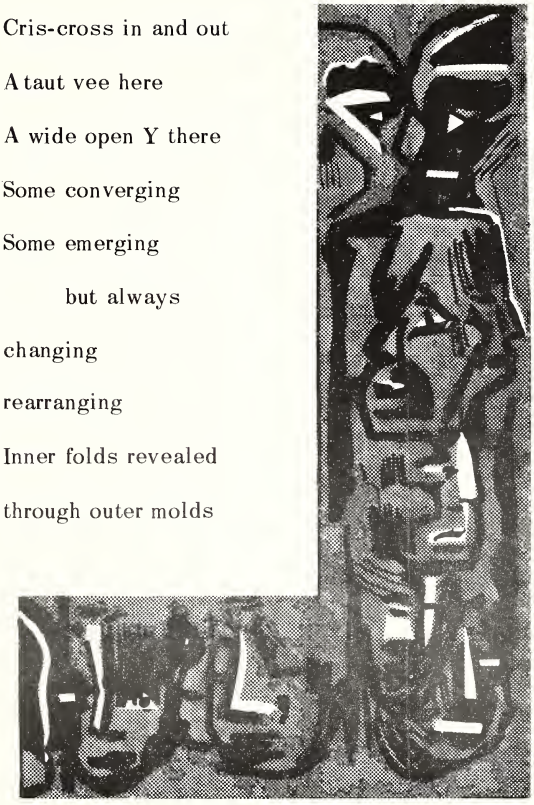
I have often wondered what your reflections
are, for you never reveal to anyone or confide
such things as what you do or how you side
on issues and you seem wise in your silent rejection.
You work alone in quiet silence with slow
accurate motions, almost fearing that fast
pursuits will not in time last
and your movements are a gentle flow.
You appear to analyse people and existence
as though you were going to render a comment
on human behavior or happenings that are recent,
but your remarks are tempered with reticence
until you capture the meaningless stale
words of others and again the silence prevails.

MARTHA SPRIGG

Faces

BETSY DICKERSON

Cris-cross in and out
A taut vee here
A wide open Y there
Some converging
Some emerging
but always
changing
rearranging
Inner folds revealed
through outer molds



Dwimple

PATRICIA C. CHAPMAN

Once upon a time in the fairy kingdom lived a little elfette named Dwimple. She stood as tall as her six inches would allow. Short black ringlets curled round her elfin ears. She wore burnt orange, brown and spring green playsuits with matching leaf shoes.

Dwimple played pranks on people. She didn't mean any harm. She just loved to dabble with colors.

Once she mixed lavender dye into the dew wand. George, the fairy in charge of putting these water diamonds on display in the people's world. He shook his wand to see if he could clear the trouble up, but he only mixed the dye more. Little lavender dew drops spread out in an arc and settled over the flowers just opening.

"Whatever is the matter with my wand. "said George. "I know I cleaned it last night." He heard a titter of laughter behind him. "Oh, no! It's *you,* Dwimple. Just look what you've done. Now I'll have to sit down and clean my wand again. The people's world will miss the early morning's sparkle. And *I'll* be a whole half day behind in my work."

"Golly, I didn't mean to make more work for you, George. I just wanted to make their dreary black-white world easier to live in."

"But you knew no one was to put color into the world until our queen decided if it would be good for them."

Dwimple wanted so much to share her colors with the earth people that she took her pink, red, yellow, gold, green, blue, violet, lavender paints and mixed them into the waters of the world.

The blues and greens raced through streams and rivers into lakes and oceans. Pinks, yellows and violets warmed the cold frozen north. Red filled the desert lakes.

The fairy guardsmen saw the spreading colors and rushed the news to the queen.

"Who stirred their paints into the people's water against my order. Speak up. We can check your paint supply if you don't." The queen's voice echoed through the kingdom.

Dwimple, who had come back to view the world's new color, saw her work had been discovered. Her voice quivered as she answered, "I did, your majesty. I only thought they should share my colors too."

"But you knew my orders, Dwimple. Now you must clean the colors from the waters of the people's world."

"You mean I have to take back *all* of my colors?"

"Yes."

So Dwimple scuffed her leaf shoes all over the earth as she collected her paints out of the seas, rivers, lakes and streams. She stored them in the rain closet. She shoved violet on the bottom shelf. She dusted the

narrow middle shelf free from cobwebs and squeezed the yellow and red so tight they formed orange in the middle. The blues and greens she stacked on the tip-top shelf. The very end of each rain faintly streaks the sky with these rainbow streams of color.

The people thanked her for the little bit of color by naming some of their waters--the Red Sea, the Yellow River, the Blue Danube.

Some blues and greens had already mixed with river beds and ocean floors. This coloring Dwimple could not get out. So though the water looked blue and green on earth, a sample poured crystal clear to satisfy the queen.

Now Dwimple was in trouble. For she had disobeyed the queen's orders twice.

"Dwimple, "said the queen, "I hope you've learned your lesson. "

"Yes, but shouldn't they have color too? How dull our world would be if we had no color. "

"You are generous to want to share your colors and to keep you out of mischief, I've decided to give you a chance to redeem yourself. If you can tell me a good way to put color in the people's world, I'll let you do it. "

Tingling all over, Dwimple sat and thought and thought.

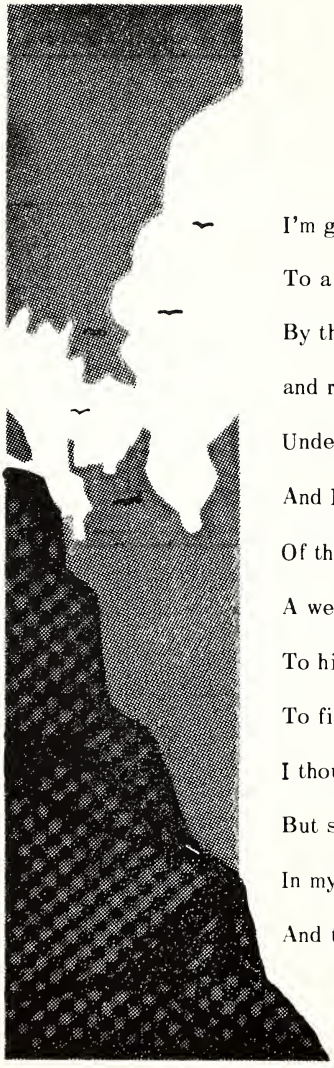
"I know. We could mix a little red, gold and brown in the mountains and rocks to make them sparkle. Then we could paint all the trees and grass green. Let's see. The flowers could be blue bells, violets, yellow daffodils, red, orange, and yellow roses, lavender lilacs, daisy centers dotted gold. I could paint them all colors to brighten up the green."

"But wouldn't the same color all the time be just as dull as the black and white is now? "

"Oh, dear! that could happen. " She thought again. "Well, I could change the colors all year long. I would have a bright yellow-green for the budding season. I'd change it darker and darker as the fruits come. Just before the winds lull the leaves off the trees, I could paint them gold, red, orange, yellow, brown, rust, brilliant colors as a change from the green to race all over the land on the back of the wind. In the snow season, I'd leave the world as it had been so they would appreciate the color when it came again. So that they won't be afraid their world will stay black and white, I'll leave the fir tree green all year round. "

"You have solved the problem of keeping yourself busy and giving color to the world. I hereby name you Dwimple, Color Keeper, Tinter, Toner, and Painter of the People's World. "

The Return



MARIYA TRUSKOL

I'm going home -
To a home that's sheltered
By the overhanging cliffs above. It will come
and reach out to me, for I have sweltered
Under the searing, sneering sun,
And I have traveled against the face
Of the moon, cold and steel-gray.
A weary, lone-borne soul am I, without a place
To hide, without a way
To find myself. There was no trail.
I thought I found it many times,
But suddenly it stopped, leaving me alone to quail
In my fright. But now, one more hill to climb,
And there will it be. At last - my place to run.

Rose Day and Fish

KATHRYN KENYON

It is dawn. The sun is beginning to open light and a warmth breaks onto the streets and river. Steam starts up from the ground and from the houses, watery in their brownness.

This is a brown morning of yellow birds descending on the town with Mr. Bordeau going slowly in his patent leather shoes. Around him white steam wheels upward as the morning presses down. The warmth is on his shoulders as he passes by the church on the corner. It has a cat in its tower that treads across the creaking wood stairs--a ghost of a cat--at night celebrating noise.

His gin-burnt nose prickles as cold air disappears and the warmth is down to his wrists. His suit is a gentleman's tan, loose at the collar with a stylish polka-dot tie. Mr. Bordeau passes by the grammar school. And now the steam rises away as the seams of cool and warm are sewn together and day is here.

Yet he goes on as though the time were always day. Slow steps, white head, white gloves, he is on his way to the sea and his feet sing day in the sludge of gravel.

In the footpath on Lakings Road, the holes on the soles of his shoes leave cheek-prints of his feet behind and wild roses grow on the rock wall. Mr. Bordeau stops beside them, looking at them carefully. They are small auburn roses, he sees. His eyes squinting as he leans over gazing at them, he takes off his hat.

"Here, Julia. This one's for ye," he takes a stem, reaching out in front of him. His eyes are watery as he smiles. She would tuck it in her hair and hand him one for his lapel. He laughs as he brings it back to himself and puts it in his collar.

"Why thank ye, Julia. It is a beautiful one. Ye've found the best o' the bunch," and she would take his arm as they walked to the sea. So he goes on down the road to the end of the wall and turns the corner. A woman in a shawl crosses the road. She is grey with haste.

"A brright good mornin' to ye, Madam Conn," he bows. She rushes to the bus stop, shifting her feet and twisting a purse handle between her fingers as she nods to her watch. It is late.

"Aye, good mornin'! I've had no time for me toast and tea today. Left it on the table when seven struck, I did. Bother a mornin'," she looks at him. "Still picken' 'm roses. Aye." she waves her arm and the bus lumbers to a quick stop.

When she is gone, Mr. Bordeau looks to the rose's petals and smiles to them as if they might hear. They have stirred in the wind, but there is no sound. He sighs and touches them softly. He remembers walking down the street past shops and signs on other days.

"Aye, Julia, it *is* a beautiful mornin' come." The red rose and purple of his bow-tie smile as he walks on.

Mr. Kno's wagon rolls in a trot over the cobbles and Nelly snorts.

"Good mornin', waves Mr. Bordeau as he takes his derby off. The wagon rolls to a hasty stop.

"Na, isn't. Come up for a lift if ye're wanting one. But hurry along there. It's market day, y'know." Mr. Bordeau sits on the wagon-box and the wheels start to roll fast.

"Saw the roses, this mornin'. Julia used to like them," he smiles. "They're lovelier now-a-days. Just look at that colour. Lots of them this year, too," he beams.

"Now look at me with roses, will ye. I haven't time with me horses. Lost a foal yesterday when Jenny dropped. Was a good un, too. A year shot to the devil and ye're looking at roses," he squeezes the reins.

"Where ye wanting off, Mr. Bordeau?"

"By the river. I'm on my way to the sea."

They roll on farther in silence, Mr. Bordeau watching the light on shop windows, waving his hand and laughing when they pass someone, and Mr. Kno watching the road between Nelly's ears.

The shine of wet cobbles is disappearing as the street dries. There are a few clumps of weed growing up between cracks along the curb and the houses are closer together as they near the river. Turning a corner, the road is unpaved and they rattle louder.

"We've come, Mr. Bordeau. Here ye be." He climbs from the box.

"I thank ye," but the wagon is off in a clattering and a cloud of haste and his voice falls into the air.

The sun is going higher now. The large, gloved hand takes out a cigar. For a moment he stands still there breathing in the flavour of tobacco, watching it waft up into the air in its smoke spiralling way. Then he walks on again. But as he shuffles along, a stone from the footpath slips into the hole in his shoe. The old fellow stops and bends to his waist, lifting his foot half-way and his hand rolls the stone out in the crook of his finger. He stands up straight then, taking a deep breath, but as he puts his foot down, it steps on the cuff of the other's too long trouser leg. He laughs and his brow folds into the white of his forehead. He puffs on the cigar in his teeth, looking up. And so he goes on still farther, down the road to the sea.

Hulls lay quiet on the river bank. The tide is low and ducks are up rowing in the centre current. As a fisherman tosses his line from the bridge, Mr. Bordeau comes to the river-bank and stands beneath.

His patent leather shoes shine with the day's reflection. He can look down at them and see a circle of white and a smudge of sea-mud by the shoestring.

"Aye, how's the bite this mornin'? he calls up.

"None!" the fisherman salts back. "Ain't the time. Fish ain't swallowin'."

"Give them a while. The day's just begun..."

"What's all this noise, you old fish. This is a day, yesterday was one too, so? Might as well have been a red sky for my luck. Look at me, a poor man, an' you're pipin' about mornin's. Look, ha' I got one for you! I haven't a bob in me pocket, not one," he leans farther over the bridge railing, wrinkling his eyes at Mr. Bordeau. "Yesterday we were out there," he points to the sea, "and not a fish. Not one. And then along comes one o' them blinkin' seals. Then another. You know what that means, ah? No fish. Them seals are out there eatin' them, and here I am, starving. So's we shoot them and pretty soon sharks come up after. No fish."

He stops for a moment, staring at Mr. Bordeau.

"What's that you got there, a rose? "

'"Aye. It's a right fine one. My wife and I used to come down here. She'd wear.... "

"What's this? Get along with you, fish. Wi' all that noise you'll scare 'way the spotties if the ducks ha'nt already. "

"Aye, aye, " he drops his cigar. There is only a quick hiss when it hits the damp. But in his slowness, he smiles away as though that were the power that walked him. And once again there is no sound to listen or be listened to except the pulsing of his feet.

The footpath has become all sand now as he comes closer to the shore. The waves are calm in the early day. They only roll a game over the reflecting beach and sandpipers scud along with their beaks to the bubbling crabs. Here the river tide is stronger as it closes in circles, skipping in foam and currents to the sea.

He takes off a glove and touches the softness of the petals in his lapel. Closing his eyes, he turns his face up to feel the sea wind on his throat and his brows. It is warm. Still, he goes on.

There are two figures stooping by the waves when Mr. Bordeau comes to the sand. He walks across the stretches to them, his hat in hishand. One is the lighthouse keeper. He is climbing over some rocks with a lantern in his hand, craning into brown crevices. The other is his son standing in the shallows whipping a seaweed wisp on the waves' backs.

"Good mornin', friends, " he starts.

"Mornin', " the keeper answers still staring into the rocks. The boy does not answer. He merely keeps twisting his wrist and slapping the ocean. Then he stops for a moment to sneeze, his mouth turns up to the left as he sniffs after; he continues beating. The keeper wanders rock over rock with kerosene in his nose. Mr. Bordeau leans over and glimpses into the hollows.

"I say, Mr. Eock, what are you looking for? "

"Heh, what's you? Me? Don't you see nothin' come out of the sky? Kinda like a star, only it isn't. But it comes in these rocks last night. I'm sure on it. Last night. " The keeper pushes some dried seaweed aside to look underneath it. Mr. Bordeau picks up a leaf of it and turns it over to rub the salt off the back.

"There are some roses on the wall down Lakings Road, " he thinks aloud, seeing some higher waves. The tide is beginning to come in again as the day greatens and velvets under yellow. He puts a thumb in his large waist-coat pocket and watches the keeper climb on farther down the bank in rocks. The boy is quiet, so neither answer him. Still he looks to the sky and the sea.

"Come, come, " he laughs to himself. "They know it is a wonderful day. " On down the shore he goes, the waves' rim touching his feet. He is walking faster now, mumbling that they know and looking at the auburn petals. It is too early yet for the children to build towers. In the evening sometimes Mr. Kno brings Nelly down--' a quick step into quiet,' the horse once snorted.

Faster he goes. He wants to sing to the roses because they are growing on the wall, and wade with someone in the waves. And suddenly he stops. Bending over he picks up a shell, fingers it in his palm until it is warm and with a smile he pitches it into the air. It does not go high because he is old, but he sighs happily when it hits the water.

"They know, Julia. And it *is* a beautiful day. Feel the sand, " he

touches it.

A dog swims along in the foam with his brown nose breathing in the white.

"Aye, laddie, here," he stoops to him. The dog flings a glance from his squinting eye, the foam caught on his lashes, and lopes away through the waves. Then it is still. The rain of yellowness is dampening Mr. Bordeau's feet as they go. He becomes wet with it, yet he does not even look behind where the keeper and his son are or Mr. Kno with Nelly in the town. Madam Conn will be in Chelmsford now, he surmises. So he walks along to the northshore.

Around the next bend he sees a grey fish in the sand. Its mouth smacks slowly sucking in a little air, the fin gestures down as though to propel away the tides it is used to. But the eye stares up. In the sucking there is a fishhook making the top lip slow. He sits on the sand and takes the fish into his hand.

"What do you see, old fish? I am feeling the sky right now," he rocks the hook loose and tucks it into his pocket. The grey tail thrills quietly between his fingers.

"Fish, so still," the hand curves.

"When I went down Lakings Road, I saw the shops, and school, and the rock wall. I first met her there. Then sometimes we'd sit and look at the roses growing. They were always wild and she'd take some home after. Aye, and she laughed when they came new each year. They made her laugh, those roses. She'd wear one in her hair, and she'd give me one, too. She liked these best. This is the kind of day she loved, too--shining. Beautiful, today," Mr. Bordeau sighs. "And I saw the sky and the steam meet, this morning." He gets up and walks into the waves as deep as his knees. With only a push of his elbow he puts the fish under. And the eye looks up.

As noon comes down, he smiles to himself.

"You see, my man, the day is so beautiful." He turns up the beach, bathed in his yellow and touching the rose. He walks on to Lakings Road again, then past the shops, nodding to people coming in and out, rubbing the petals, toward the wall.

"It is a warmth in these gloves I feel, aye," and only foot-prints with the circle of the holes in his shoes are left on the footpath behind.

Christmas Tree

PATRICIA C. CHAPMAN

Santa is coming.

Children are running

To find if he left them the tree.

Up at five.

Did it arrive?

No, not yet!

Oh! wanna bet?

I found it behind the garage.

Cut it to size.

Add bright winking eyes.

Cover it then

With gingerbread men

And wind it with long popcorn chains.

Santa has come.

How children run

Shouting, "Look what Santa brought me."

The Little Green Car

PEGGY GANNON

Today is my birthday. I am one year old. Maybe today someone will want me. I am not as pretty as the other cars here, but still someone just may want me.

But I am so old and dusty. The green paint on my hood is streaked from dirt and rain. My wheels aren't shiny anymore. I am in the corner where all the dust blows, and no one cleans me off. But my motor is strong, and I will love anyone who wants to buy me.

When I was born, I had a shiny new coat of green paint. The glass on my windshield was clean and bright. My white seats were soft. And my wheels were polished until they shone. I was beautiful; just as beautiful as the rest of my brothers and sisters. We all were so proud.

We wondered who was going to buy us. One of my brothers had a red coat of paint. He wanted to belong to a fireman. He liked to chase fire engines. My other brother wore a black coat of paint. He wanted to belong to a policeman, My sister was painted pink. She wanted to belong to a rich girl. She liked to travel to many places. But I wanted to belong to someone nice. Someone who would love me.

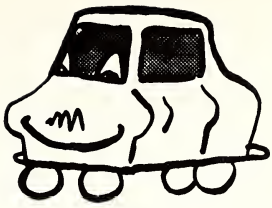
One day a man came to look at us. He was wearing a brown suit and a green tie. He came to choose some cars to sell in America. America was many miles away. He looked us over very carefully. He chose my two brothers, the red and the black ones. He picked my sister with the pink coat. Then he came to look at me. He noticed my shiny green coat. He looked behind me at my motor. He sat in my soft, white seats. He tested my headlights. He checked my tires, and then he said, "This one too."

I was so happy, I was going to America. I was going to go on a big ship across a big ocean to a new country. Surely there I would find someone to want me.

So the next day we drove down to the harbor. We were loaded onto a big, white ship. Then the ship's whistle blew, and we began to sail out into the ocean. We were on our way to America.

When we got there, the man in the brown suit was waiting at the end of the dock. He helped us off the ship, and then he took us to a big car lot. There were hundreds of other cars here. He put us right up in front, under the string of lights, so everyone could see us. Then he washed our coats and shined our fenders. Now we were ready to be sold.

Soon a policeman came to look for a new car. He had on a bright blue uniform and shiny white helmet. He talked to the man in the brown suit He said he wanted a strong car to help him catch men who broke the law. He looked at my red painted brother and said, "Too bright." He walked over to me, looked at me, and said, "Too small." Then he saw my brother, with the black coat of paint. He tested his motor. He looked at his wheels. Then he said to the man in the brown suit, "This is the one I want." So my brother in his shiny, black coat drove off with the policeman in the white helmet.



Several days later another man came to see the man in the brown suit. He was wearing a red fireman's hat. He told him that he was looking for a fast, red car. He looked at a big red car over near the salesman's office. He looked at another red car two rows behind us. Then he saw my brother with the red paint. He walked over to him. He sat in the driver's seat. He tooted my brother's horn. Then he turned to the man in the brown suit and said, "This one is just right." So my brother drove off with the fireman in the red hat that just matched his red coat of paint.

So then my sister and I were left. One day a tall girl with blonde hair came to see the man in the brown suit. She was wearing a fur coat. The man showed her many big cars, but she didn't like them. Then she saw my sister. She pointed to her and said to the man, "I want that little pink one, over there, in the front." So my sister, in the pink coat, drove home with the girl in the fur coat.

Now I was alone. Men came to look at cars. They didn't want me; I was too slow. Women came to look at cars. They didn't want me; I was too small. Then one day the man in the brown suit bought a load of shiny new cars. He came over to me and he moved me way into the back of the lot to make room for the new cars.

Soon everyone forgot about me. No one washed my coat. No one polished my fenders. No one shined my wheels. Nobody wanted me.

But today is my birthday. Perhaps someone will want me today. Will that man in the grey suit want me? No, he's taking a shiny blue car. There's a mother and father and a little girl standing beside a big white car. They look nice. I'd like to have a little girl to drive with. Do you think they will want me. No, they are getting into that big white car. It's getting late; pretty soon my birthday will be over, and still nobody wants me.

Look! Out there under the lights, where I used to be, is a lady with red hair. She is talking to the man in the brown suit. She looks nice. Do you suppose she will want me. But I am so dusty. I am not clean and shiny. She wouldn't want me. See, the man is showing her a pretty yellow one.

Now she is walking away from it; maybe she doesn't want it. I wish she would want me. She looks so nice; she looks like she would want a little green car. Oh! I wish I could toot my horn and make her look at me; then she would know how much I wish she would want me.

She is coming this way. Do you think she has seen me? Yes she has, she has seen me; and she is stopping here. She brushes aside some of the dust on my hood. Then she turns to the man in the brown suit and says, "I think this is just what I want. It is small, and I like green. I think it will be a good car for me.

She's going to take me. Did you hear that? She wants me. Now I have someone to love. Now I will have a home and someone to want me.

The Feast of Lights

SISTER SEAN PATRICE, CSJ

Bee's light glimmers on the gift of doves,
The price of poor men under the Law
and the simple showing of two loves
for the child that shepherds, wise men saw.

Wax fire flickers on the Temple's seer
as he cradles the ancient of days.
In canticle joy he blesses here
the light that blinds some in a dark maze,
for others shows crooked paths straight.
Now for the mother his words thrust
sword's seven-fold piercings as her fate.
as at Nazareth, she now, will trust.

Honey tapers halo three walking
through the Temple gates. None looks up from
his trading with another, talking
of prices and the Savior to come.

Poem for the King

Let us hang new songs, our songs, upon the tree

Hurry dreams and visions from old roots,

Discover ancient building sites,

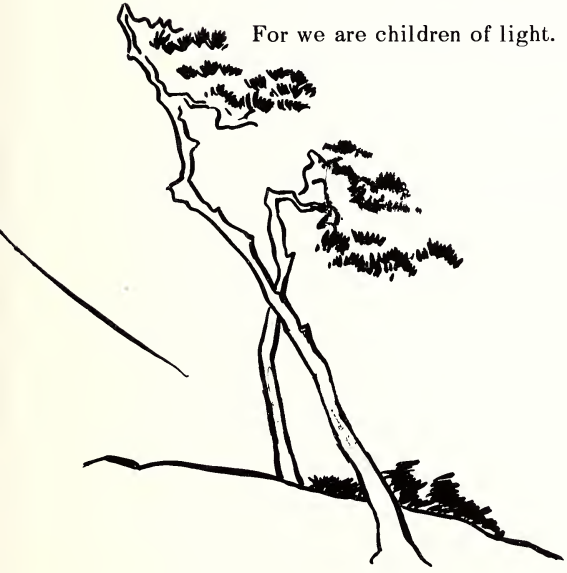
Buy back Jerusalem in three long days,

Blow dust from temple courtyards

And install electric lights,

Shout new shouts unto the Lord,

For we are children of light.



SISTER MONA ANN, CSJ

Song of Bertram

Once upon a time in a far country
Lived a certain Balaam and his dumb donkey.

But old King Balac of Moabland
Wanted this Balaam to lend him a hand

And rid his country of a gypsy gang
Who just sat around with their harps and sang.

When Balaam asked the Lord how he should act,
God said, "Do nothing, " and that's a fact.

So Balaam sent word that the trip was off
But Balac sent again in quite a huff,

And offered many gifts if he'd only come
To free his people and then go home.

"Very well, " said Balaam, but his answer was slow,
"Just don't blame me if I can't go. "

Just to be different, God said, "Yes,
I'll help you get out of this mess,

But promise me that you'll do as I say
And you'll probably be back on this very day. "

VIOLETTA CLIFFE

So Balaam rode Bertram out through the gate
But an angel with a sword told them to wait.

When Bertram made tracks for an open space
Balaam beat Bertram back into place.

The third time this happened Bertram lay down
And Balaam beat Bertram right into the ground.

Then God gave a voice to the poor dumb beast
In hopes that the murderous blows would cease.

"Why do you beat me for doing you good?
I've never done wrong, but just what I should."

Just then the eyes of blind Balaam came clear,
He saw the angel and falling in fear

He begged him for pardon then asked him why
He stood in their way so they couldn't get by.

"You're to go in God's name and give blessings instead
Of calling down curses on anyone's head."

"Many thanks," said Balaam, and went on his way
After turning to Bertram long enough to say:

"Oh, Bertram and Balaam, two there be,
And which one I ask is the true donkey?"

Sonnet 1

You turn from me
toward darkness through the glass
where finger pressed for finger once but fell
unfound through century upon sealed century
to tilt the moment set teetering from antiquity
by Adam's fist fallen in a crash
on Golgotha. This moment tilting still
in breathless balance between you and me,
moment bated on the blade of Abraham, weighted heavy
with white bones heaped on Eden's grass--
uprooted in an eye-flash, untombed the swell
that shook and fossiled Sodom's city--
leaving silent stubs to comb a rubbled universe
that finger finding finger would reverse.

PAT SMITH

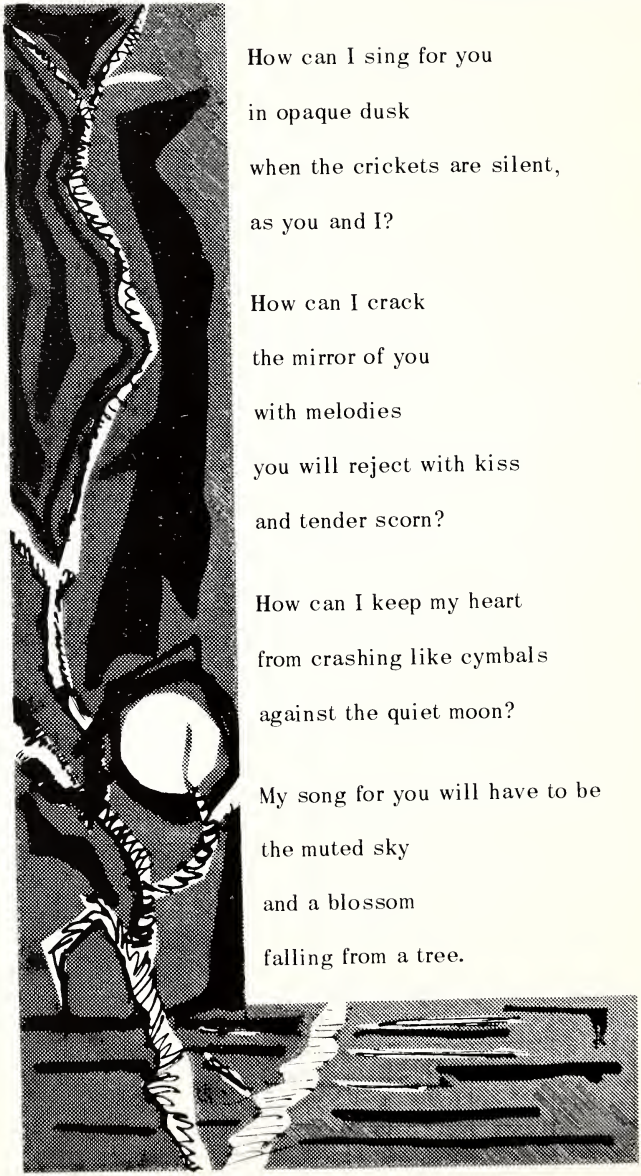
The Welcome Thief

SHERIANNE CHAPMAN

When soft rain has ceased its silent fall
And nature delivers her newborn world,
And earth regains her green-hued shawl,
My mind remains around darkness curled.
Can it even perceive a wriggling worm
Which slides down the veins of a dew-damp leaf,
And sniffs to see if wet earth is firm
Then ventures out like a crafty thief?
Gentle-faced flowers admit their quiet quest
And welcome him to a colored world
Where nature puts on her rainbow vest.
They know he escapes with stolen goods.
Laboring under each dark gem of thought,
He disappears into rain-soaked woods.

To Pan

MICHELE MAYOTTE



How can I sing for you
in opaque dusk
when the crickets are silent,
as you and I?

How can I crack
the mirror of you
with melodies
you will reject with kiss
and tender scorn?

How can I keep my heart
from crashing like cymbals
against the quiet moon?

My song for you will have to be
the muted sky
and a blossom
falling from a tree.

White Fir

White

illumines

the parched

earth extending

treasured warmth to

fir

standing in

the midst of arching

sturdy arms, sheltering

the precious message.

VIVIAN LOPIZZO

Country Venus

VIVIAN LOPIZZO

"Ma, come down here," called Pa at the bottom of the stairs. "I want to talk to you afore the paiper man gits here."

Pa wuz standin' 'tween the front door and the stairs in his new breeches readjustin' his green an' yeller tie. Pa bein' sich an artist didn't want nobody to think he didn't know 'is colors. So, when Ma chose him the dark purple breeches, he thought he'd git himself a pritty, colored tie, "nice an' bright."

Soon, Ma came boundin' down the stairs. Poor Ma; she couldn't help it. The stairs kinda shook a little. Us kids called them, "Ole Faithfuls" cuz they held up so long. "Twuzn't that our house wuz so old. Grampa had built it hisself when he first come to Dixie. Freddie an' Annie an' me wuz born here; so wuz Pa. We wuz glad Grampa built those stairs in, though, 'cause we sure use 'em a lot. Soon as Ma got down stairs an' took one look at Pa, she knew he wuz hidin' somethin'. She always knew when Pa stood there grinnin' through his teeth. Ma put on her specs, "Jeremiah Langley, jes look at that there shirt!" she bellowed. "Why that paiper man' gonna think I never wash your clothes!"

"But Ma, I ain't got time to change afore he gits here an' b'sides, I got to tell you somethin'."

"You can talk all you want to Jeremiah, after you've..."

"Hey Pa, he's here! The paiper man's here!"

Pa gave out a big sigh an' puckered up the corners of his mouth. The man sauntered up to the front door. None of us kids wuz allowed to open the door fer strangers, so we jes sorta peeked 'round Pa's big brown easy chair so's we could see what wuz goin' on. Ma lumbered on up the stairs so as to let the men talk alone. 'Sides, she always left when strange folk came.

Pa seemed awful twittery. What with adjustin' his tie an' clearin' his throat; why you'd think he had a pack o' bull frogs in there. Finally, Pa got to the door an' opened it.

"Mornin' suh."

"Good morning. Mr. Langley, I believe."

"Yes suh....Come in suh!"

Boy that paiper man wuz sure slick. His hair wuz all oiled down an' his clothes fit real tight. Freddie wondered how he sat down without splittin' his pants. I said maybe he didn't. He took a few careful steps an' looked 'round; you know, like he owned the place. Then, he sniffed the air. Bet he don't git fresh pecan pies at home. He walked into the front parlor but Pa didn't move.

"Oh, excuse me, Mr. Langley. I'm Ned Barlow from the 'Daily Herald. I presume you know we are going to run an article on your work."

Pa cleared his throat, "Yes, suh."

"Yes sir! It's not too often that we get such artistic genius in these parts. Why your first place winner has been the talk of the whole community."

We wuz glad the paiper man said that 'cause Pa's face lit up jes then.

"Really, suh, it wuz nothin' special. Why, I do that sort o' thing jes about every day."

"You don't say?"

"Yes, suh. Ah, Mr. Barlow, suh, ah, why don't we go on outside an' talk?"

Pa opened the door fer the paiper man. Then, he turned 'round an' winked at us.

It wuz a genuwine Dixie summer day, so Pa an' Mr. Barlow pulled up two o' Ma's lawn chairs 'neath a clump o' weepin' willows. Us kids called that clump our "summerhouse" 'cause it wuz nice an' shady an' there wuz plenty o' room so as Annie could play house there. Pa wuz always sittin' out there paintin' when there wuzn't no hoein' or feedin' or plantin' to do. But, he 'lowed us to play 'round him so long as we didn't git into his stuff. Sometimes we'd pose fer him. But his pittures never turned out lookin' like us. B'sides there wuz usually lots o' people in the back or a fair or somethin'. Pa went an' did the same thing when he painted Cuzin Lizzie. Cuzin Lizzie's kinda young and mighty purty. An' when she came visitin' fer the weekend, she liked to go sit out under the willows an' look at all the trees an' grass an' brook runnin' down to the river. She'd stay out there fer the longest time.

One day, Pa didn't have nothin' else to do, so he set up his stuff an' started paintin' away. Boy! it sure didn't turn out lookin' like Cuzin Lizzie! She wuz wearin' dirty jeans an' an old shirt. But Pa's lady wuzn't wearin' nothin'--at all! She wuz jes sittin' lookin' at the trees without nothin' on. Pa ain't never showed that one to Ma. He didn't even let on he'd been paintin'. Soon as he wuz through, he high-tailed it 'round back. Freddie said Pa hid the paintin' in the cellar. Guess that's so Ma couldn't find it. Ma never went down in the cellar. She said it made her bones ache. Pa ain't never even talked to us 'bout it. Guess he hadn't seen us peekin'.

When Pa went in to wash up, Annie an' me stole 'round back to git a look-see at the lady. Pa had written "Country Venus" 'neath the lady. Guess that's what he wanted to call 'er. Annie went up an touched the pitture. She said it felt real artistic like the real ones in the Loover. Annie wuz always saying smart things. Then, we remembered the fair. It wuz gonna be a real big one with cows an' preserves an' pies an' dancin'. They wuz gonna have an art exhibit, too. Ma wuz makin' Pa enter his last paintin' called, "A Lady at the Fair." She thought it wuz 'propriate. We figgered we could jes switch the paintin's when they wuz in the truck since Jed would be drivin' into town. We didn't let on to nobody, not even Pa--we figgered we'd want him to be surprised if he won.

The day o' the fair, Ma gave us kids a dollar apiece an' let us go with Jed. Pa couldn't come 'cause Nelly wuz 'bout ready to calve.

There wuz lots o' people at the fair when we got there. Freddie wanted to head over to the preserves 'cause they always gave out free samples. But Annie an' me went over to the exhibit. All the paintin's

were out already an' there wuz sure lots o' people starin' an' pointin' at Pa's. The menfolk wuz nearly all smilin' so we wuz glad the judges would be men. Jes then Freddie came runnin' up, his mouth all smeared with home-made, green mint jelly. He said the winner of the exhibit would be announced in the 'Daily Herald', an' would git an intraview by a paiper man. Then he pointed to the big tent behind us. Annie wuz standin' there wavin' to us. When we walked over, a big man with lots o' keys on his belt come up to us an' asked us what we wanted. Annie asked him if the judgin' wuz goin' on. He said yes an' scat! So we waited 'til he left an' snuck up behind on t'other side. Some men voices wuz sayin'.

"Two votes fer 'Cows: An Impression'; an' five votes fer 'A Country Venus.' Guess that does it men. We'll send a reporter to Pa Langley's place tomorrow. Joe, you call Pa an' tell 'im he's won."

Freddie wuz about to yell somethin' but Annie put her hand over his mouth. Then, while she wiped the jelly off, Annie said we ought to go on home, I got to thinkin' 'bout what might happen. We ain't never figgered on Pa's winnin'--really! An' we wouldn't 'a minded much, 'cept fer Ma. But, then, I figgered Pa'd take care o' her.

We wuz jes walkin' in the kitchen door when Pa put down the phone. I said maybe we ought to hide seein' as how he might be sore. Pa never got mad. But, Pa saw us come in an' he wuz actually smilin'. Our phone wuz right 'neath the stairs on the side o' the kitchen door. There wuz a chair near the phone an' fer a minute there, I thought Pa wuz gonna plop down in it. But 'stead o' doin' that he slaps his hand on Freddie's shoulder.

"Run upstairs an' git your ma, Freddie."

Guess Freddie wuz scared 'cause he jes stood there.

"Freddie, boy, run upstairs an' git your ma. I got some big news to tell y'all."

Meantime, me an' Annie didn't know what to do so we jes followed Pa 'round the stairs to the front parlor. Freddie came slidin' down the bannister with Ma chasin' 'im down the stairs.

"Well, Jeremiah, what's wrung now? This here child o' yours dun scared the wits out o' me. Said you had to see me in a hurry. What is it?!"

"Calm down now, Ma. I got some news fer you..."

"Nelly calved."

"No, Ma..."

"You tore them new breeches."

"No, no. Now jes a minute, Ma. Let me tell you. Remember that paintin' I sent in to the exhibit at the fair?..."

Ma sensed it wuz gonna be good news, "You mean the one I made you send in?"

"Yeah, that one. Well, Ma, it dun won first prize!"

Freddie wuz 'bout ready to open his mouth so Annie pinched 'im.

"They're gonna send a reporter out here tomorrow to interview me 'bout my paintin'. Now ain't that news fer you?"

Ma had stood near Pa's easy chair by the window, her arms folded. Now, her mouth dropped open.

"Why Jeremiah! You've finally made somethin' o' yourself. How much is he gonna pay you?"

"Why, nothin' Ma. Leastways, I don't think he is."

Ma didn't say nothin'. She jes walked out into the kitchen an' started bangin' pans. Anyways, we figgered it wuz better'n her findin' out 'bout

the paintin'. Ma didn't say much the rest o' the day. Then this mornin' while Pa wuz waitin' fer the paiper man to come, he wuz sittin' in his brown chair, near the window, smokin' his pipe. Pa'd been twittery all mornin' an' he done spilled some ashes on the chair. It sorta burnt a little hole right in front on the seat. Guess Pa thought no real harm'd come outa tellin' Ma 'bout it. But, when he called her down, she spotted his dirty shirt an' Pa couldn't git in another word till finally the paiper man come.

Now Pa an' Mr. Barlow wuz sittin' out under the willows but us kids couldn't go snoopin'. We wuz peekin' out o' the front window--the one that looked out o'er the porch. Still, we couldn't hear nothin'.

But, 'most as soon as they'd got settled, they wuz up again. What with swattin' flies an' moppin' their faces, I suppose they'd be lot comfortabler inside. So Pa an' Mr. Barlow brought Ma's chairs back to the porch an' sat down jes out o' reach o' the sun.

"Now, Mr. Langley, tell me what inspired you to paint such a beautifully proportioned figure? "

"Beootifully proportioned? Well, ah, suh, I wuz strollin' down at Jesse's Grocery store waitin' fer Ma to git dun shoppin'. I wuz lookin' through the preserve section when I saw this lady on t'other side. She wuz a right eyeful... "

"She certainly was that. "

"...an' I looked at her fer a minute or two. I particularly noticed her clothes. They jes didn't look right on her. "

"I'd say you solved that problem quite well. "

"Yes, suh. That wuzn't no hard job. But, then, I couldn't say paintin' is hard fer me. I enjoy it after lookin' at cows an' chickens all day. "

"Do you often choose women as your subjects? "

"Why..., yes suh. I believe I usually do. "

"Would you say 'Venus' is characteristic of all your work? "

"'Venus'? " Pa turned kinda red. "Now what's that little lady got to do with mah work? "

"That was your entry. Don't you remember, Mr. Langley? "

"Mah ent...? "

Pa jes couldn't say nothin'. He jes sat there, his mouth hangin' open.

"But, I didn'....Are you sure, suh, that...? "

"I'm quite sure. Is there some mistake? Mr. Langley? "

"Ooh...yes suh....Ah...you ain't,...ah...gonna print this article...ah ...are you, suh? "

"Why, of course, I have to. That's why I was sent here! "

"Oh, but you cain't. 'Spose you lost the paiper you're writin' on suh. "

"I don't intend to lose it! "

"Mr. Barlow, suh, I cain't git that article in the paiper. You jes wouldn't understan', suh. But, I cain't. "

Pa started wipin' his brow. I guess that made the paiper man break down'cause he put his paipers away.

"Look, Mr. Langley, tell you what I'll do. I'll try to keep the picture of your painting out of the paper. "

"Wal...that might do. "

"Look, Mr. Langley, I can't do any more than that. I can't even promise to do that much. I'll just do the best I can. "

Jes then, Freddie sneezed. I coulda wrung his neck. I guess Pa coulda too, 'cause he wuz really sore when he turned 'round an' saw us.

"I guess that'll be all, Mr. Langley. "

"Ah...yes suh. "

"I'll do what I can. "

"Thank you, suh. "

Mr. Barlow skipped down the porch stairs an' Pa stood by the door fer a minute. We didn't think we ought to even breathe 'till finally Pa opened the door. He walked to the foot o' the stairs again an' wiped his brow.

"Ma. Ma cain you come down heah a minute. I *really* got somethin' to tell you. "

How Can I Know if You

How can I know if you

(whom my heart has never known--

the greeness of your eyes

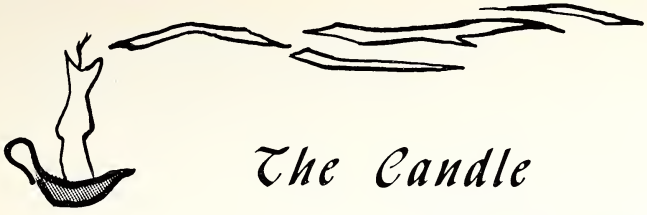
is more than in Spring

the world is green--)

make me glad to see the sun,

or has it been raining too long?

MICHELE MAYOTTE



The Candle

KATHLEEN BAKER McCAMBRIDGE

The Once and Future King is the story of King Arthur's attempts to rid his society of Might as a symbol of Right. To accomplish this aim, he devises a Round Table, a quest for the Holy Grail, and a system of Law. He considers these plans for his knights "a sort of candle... /which/ has flickered often." [1] The flickering of this candle is due to the blowing of the wind, the symbol of human nature in the novel. When Arthur's society is at peace, the candle burns bright. When it is at war, the candle flickers. In this paper, I will show how T. H. White uses the wind blowing across the earth--the wind that flickers the candle--to symbolize human nature at war; and the wind blowing above the earth--the wind which lets the candle burn bright--to symbolize human nature at peace.

The wind is first introduced in Book I, when Arthur is a young boy, Wart. To further his "eddication process," Wart visits different animal kingdoms, and assumes different animal forms. When Wart visits the ant kingdom, he has his first insight into the destructive forces within human nature that lead to war. Thinking that war is fun and knightly, the young Arthur is suddenly repulsed at the sight of "The horrible armies /of ants/ ...on the point of joining battle, to dispute the *imaginary boundaries* between their glass trays" (p. 139). The monotony of their activity "had begun to kill the life which belonged to his boyhood" (p. 130). Although men and ants fight over these boundaries, Wart is to find out that geese and badgers don't. His friend Lyc-lyck, the goose, says, "There are no boundaries among the geese" (p. 170). To her, boundaries are "*imaginary lines* on the earth" (p. 170). She says to Wart, "How can you have boundaries if you fly? Those ants of yours--and the humans too--would have to stop fighting in the end, if they took to the air" (p. 170). Arthur's badger friend says, "Even Man has a few varieties like the Esquimaux and the Gypsies and the Lapps and certain Nomads in Arabia, who do not /fight/, because they *do not claim boundaries*. True warfare is rarer in Nature than cannibalism" (p. 194).

The fighting over these boundaries is caused by the destructive forces within human nature that are symbolically embodied in the wind that blows *across the earth*. Wart encounters this wind for the first time in the kingdom of the geese. Having been changed into an owl, he arrives at their kingdom "in the belly of the night" (p. 164).

> The place in which he found himself was absolutely flat...In this enormous flatness there lived one element--the wind. For it was an element. It was a dimension, *a power of darkness*...This wind came from nowhere. It was going through the flatness of nowhere, to no place. Horizontal... infinite, the astounding dimensional weight of it streamed across the mud (pp. 164-165).

Facing into this wind the young Arthur "felt that he was uncreated...he was *living in nothing*.../the wind/ was the very self of magnitude. It was power, current, force, direction, a pulseless world-stream steady in

limbo "(p. 165). Facing into this wind, Arthur encountered humanity in its evildoing. This wind was a *power of darkness* that could snuff out a candle. Just as he felt he was "living in nothing" when he was in the wind, so too is he to feel he is "Emperor of nothing" when his kingdom is at war later on (pp. 364-65).

"Two miles to the west /of this flatland where the wind rages/, there were three spots of light in a triangle. They were the weak wicks from fishermen's cottages "(p. 165). This same evil wind, carrying the destructiveness in human nature, causes these wicks to be weak, just as the calm wind of the following morning lets the brilliant splendour of the sun shine brightly. As an owl in flight with the geese in the dawn, Wart sees how peaceful humanity can be when the wind is above the ground, and men have no boundaries to fight over. "The moment he had left the earth, the wind had vanished. Its restlessness and brutality had dropped away as if cut off by a knife. He was in it, and at peace "(p. 165). Wart and the geese "...made for the east, where the *poor light* had been, and now, before them, the *bold sun* began to rise...The vault of daybreak filled itself with heralds... "(pp. 166-167). White has contrasted a dim light with a brilliant sun; and a brutal, destructive wind with a calm, peaceful one. On the earth where there are boundaries, the wind is destructive, candles flicker, and there is war. Above the ground, the wind is calm, candles burn bright, and there is perfect peace.

Throughout his reign Arthur's system endures both periods of peace and periods of war. In Books Two and Three, these intervals are shown by the calm wind as contrasted with the flickering candle. The candle burns bright when King Arthur is formulating his plans for the Round Table, as the *"lamps /were/ burning* inside the silk tent until all hours" (p. 264). The candle flickers, however, as the knights make a fetish of his plan, and "Everybody gossips and nags and hints and speculates about who unseated whom last, and who has rescued most virgins, and who is the best knight of the Table "(p. 365). Because the Round Table does not work, Arthur sends his knights on a quest for the Holy Grail. This quest, however, results only in more bloodshed, and when the knights return home with tales of murder and revenge, Arthur *"looked at his hands* as he often did when he was in trouble "(p. 450). By looking at his hands, Arthur reinforces the image that the wind is blowing the candle. He looks at his hands because it is with them that he must shield the candle, just as he must protect his society by his rule. At another troubled time, Arthur "spoke *from the shade of his hand"* (p. 559). Again he was shielding the candle from the wind, because there was warfare throughout his kingdom, and he had to protect his system.

At other times, when the countryside is at peace, the restlessness and brutality of the wind cease altogether. For example, "during an interval of peace between the two Gaelic Wars, the young King of England was standing with his tutor...while...pennoncells /were/ hanging motionless in the calm air "(p. 220). Another peaceful interval is revealed through a description of a "fine winter morning with...no wind "(p. 297).

This peaceful wind ceases to exist in the final years of Arthur's reign, however, and he encounters only the wind of sorrow and destructiveness in Book Four. Because the quest for the Holy Grail was unsuccessful, he had tried to establish a system of justice based on Law. This plan failed too, however, and Arthur "felt he had conquered murder, to be faced with war. There were no Laws for that "(p. 629). Trying to understand why his system didn't work, Arthur

> ...remembered the belligerant ants, who claimed their boundaries, and the pacific geese, who did not. He remembered his lesson from the badger. He remembered Lyc-lyck and the island...where all....lived together peacefully, preserving their own kinds of civilization without war--because they *claimed no boundaries*...the fantastic thing about war was that it was fought about nothing--literally nothing. Frontiers were imaginary lines (p. 639).

Arthur wished, "would to Man if he could learn to fly "(p. 639). If only men could fly, they would not fight over boundaries, and the candle of his ideas could be kept burning bright. As Arthur pondered, "...the wind of sorrow whistled round /his/ pavilion at Salisbury "(p. 627). This wind of sorrow was "Dante's wind, bearing lost lovers and cranes: sabbathless Satan, toiling and turmoiling "(p. 622). This wind was the wind of power, of destruction, of restlessness and brutality. The horror of war and its embodiment in the wind are revealed in the description of the wind sounding like "drums in distant battle...like old men sighing, and women howling "(p. 622). These wailing sounds are the sounds of his kingdom, engulfed in war. The wind sounded like "...an endless snake switching through the world's undergrowth of trees and houses "(p. 622) --it was a wind that blew across the earth, where it could pass over boundaries, and where human beings could fight over them.

This wind--the evil in humanity--this distructive force had ruined his plans. As an owl in the air with the geese, Arthur had known the peaceful wind. Above the ground there had been no boundaries--no imaginary lines to fight over and cause war. The wind he now knew sounded above all "...like a live creature: some monstrous, elemental being, wailing its damnation "(p. 622). His whole kingdom was wailing its damnation. The kingdom wailed until "the candles guttered "(p. 637). Arthur had done all he could to shield the candle from the wind, and establish a peaceful society safeguarded from the destructive forces within human nature. It remained for a new generation to keep the candle burning bright. Handing the candle to a young page, Arthur expressed his last hope that the wind would never completely destroy his system, as he said, "I am giving you /Tom, the young page/ the candle now--you won't let it out? "(p. 637). The page answered, "It will burn "(p. 637).

The Advent

a blade saved the dew-fall
in time impending
peace and the bud

and a word heard
whispered in the town stirred
in the lake-oasis whirred
around the sapling linden
tree and a rock

a bud drank the dew-fall
in time impending
light and the rock

and the word found its echo
in the vine
climbing the lattice work when wine
of trampled grapes flowed
at wheat harvest

a rock cupped the dew-fall
in time impending
time and the word

reclaimed its right
in the lake-oasis and the town's lives
where the sapling's shade revives
the worker
at wheat-harvest time.

SISTER LEONARD, CSJ

Yes, Come

MICHELLE LUNDBORG

Everything became certain when the wintered earth finally with one last shudder cracked open its brown hardfrozen soil to drink deeply of warm breezes. Gradually then, after the long struggle to remain rock like, the thaw began to set in. The cracks softened. Mud began to slap and suck. The rains came with the spring, and the new smells and the new shoots and a constant trickle sound all became the new season. The whole aura of it enclosed the house, invaded it, and settled.

The old woman sensed it, even without having gone outside. Winter had been a steady penetration for her; spring was coming in brief, lovely glimpses. Wheeling the chair about the house, she would notice how differently the dust smelled, how the white light of the sun was becoming buttered. She began to relish it, having long since learned that one must shake the lethargy of winter quickly, to survive. Yes, come spring. Since the stroke, the world for her was gloriously quiet. All things were colors and shapes, angles and circles, shades and textures, all beautifully harmonious. During good moments she could smooth white dust from the furniture, or slowly rub the tarnish from the silver. But since the sickness, those moments were few. The old woman, still, participated in the pattern of the room, day, season, and felt as if she could mold her existence in her palms, mute and pomegranate heavy. She watched the movement of her daughter, thinking yes, that woman is my child, and hoping the enforced silence was bearable for her. Silently, silently, she spoke to Patricia of her new patterned textured world, of the warmth of it all, of the beauty of the long scratch on the table leg, of the depth of the carpet, of her daughter's wool skirts, of her rounded young stomach and breasts. Almost full. Yes, come spring.

Not so, the younger woman, her daughter. Patricia resented having to open doors and windows, putting away the heavy things, taking the blankets from the beds, the disappearance of the snows. The transition irked her, as much as made her uneasy. She would stand at the kitchen window and consciously will the change to stop. That night she would leave the thermostat turned up. Finally when the house grew unbearably warm, she would turn it down. And when at last the whole world became green, and everything became certain, it was no use any longer. It was. And it would be.

The green spirals of spring. The old woman sat in front of the television covered by the brown afghan. The cartoons flickered across the set, and her expression never changed. Not even when Seymore the snake fell into thirty pieces, each piece smiling. Outside, on the heavy wooden chair, Patricia sat, knees wrapped in arms, tightly. Conscious all the while that she was pressing deeper into herself the child that came with "O God why alone," she thought, "why alone why alone? Why now? Oh mama why now? Why can't I go into you and mama listen, smile and

be happy because you're going to have a grandchild. Why can't I go in there and have her say Patricia how wonderful, darling, and when. Why not? Barry damn you always Barry when I had nothing but myself and you took it and then didn't understand Barry when I told you and you said to call if I needed anything ever and winter was there and Barry how I loved you when I didn't have anything else and mamma was so sick and now not a word when finally I can do something beautiful and of mine and she sits there and makes me sick to my stomach of her I can't fight this baby any more even though of Barry and mamma. My God it's my chance for pretty and warm and God I can't let it be ruined by old old old Mama die die, you withered dry vegetable not green but yellow white and Mamma I love you and I remember the red slide and how you put it up because Daddy wouldn't and I remember all of it mamma, I love you but I can't understand you now mamma, I can't stand you how can there be me and a baby with you and your smell around here mama how how? " She stood up and walked into the house.

"Mother, you're going to have to leave... I mean it this time. Mother... "

The old woman sat in front of the flickering television, expression unchanged.

"Mother, listen. This time I mean it. It's a baby, Mother. A baby. You know what that means. It's either you and me, Mother, or me and the baby. What do you want from me Mother? It's a baby and it's mine and my God what else can I do? Mother, oh God Mother, " and she furiously stilled the television. "Listen to me. They're good to the old people there. Honestly. You can make friends there with the women your own age, Mother, not like here with just me around, and you know we don't talk to one another. I could come once a week and they have huge grounds with trees and nurses there all the time and God, oh my God, " and she rocked back and forth. The old woman sat there, heavily veined hands clasped, expression unchanged. Patricia got up, turned off the porch light, and locked the screen door. She wheeled the old woman into the bedroom, washed and undressed her, and put her into the large bed. She went to her own room, conscious of child, and opened all the windows, letting all the green spring into the room.

Mornings came finally, always with shafts of sunlight lying broken on the flowered rugs, on the couch, on the chairs. The horrible queasiness was bad for the young woman in the early morning; it became practically unbearable when she opened the old woman's door to yank open the curtains and open the windows. Both of them knew that the old woman had been awake for hours. Her yellow grey hair lay in sweaty clumps on the pillow; saliva from the corner of her mouth; the stench of soiled bedsheets and blankets permeated the hot room. "Mother we've got to start leaving these windows open, Mother I must change your bed four times a day Mother I'm so tired and so sick to my... " the young woman's voice trailed off. She picked up the old woman from the bed, cleaned and dressed her, put her in the wheel chair. She wheeled the old woman into the kitchen bright with heady spring and approaching summer. The baby food Patricia warmed smelled flat, non-dimensional. After the stench of the bedroom, the baby food odor shoved its fist down Patricia's throat, and she ran to the bathroom to gag and retch up nothing. The incredible pain of bringing up what isn't and can't be there.

With the old woman finally established in front of the television next to the window, Patricia left for the reality apart from that house, the old woman, the smells, the garbled sounds.

But it was always the same when she returned home. At first within the remaining aura of the other reality she could see the freshly dusted house, the newly polished silver. But then, little by little, the house became the only reality, and she began to smell the old woman as soon as she heard the chirpy voices of the afternoon cartoons. Nausea gone, only exhaus- now. "Mother," she pulled the chair over in front of the couch, sat down and faced the old woman. "Mother, listen. Tomorrow morning they're going to pick you up. I called today and talked to the man and he's nice and they're coming tomorrow to take care of you. Mother I know how hard this is, you know I don't want to have to have it this way you know that Mother but it's the baby coming and I'm so sick all the time and I can't really take care of you like I should and you don't have anyone to talk to here. Do you understand Mother?" The old woman sat with her expression unchanged. "It'll be lovely Mother the grounds and everything and I'll come to see you and you'll make friends your own age and you'll be taken care of well and better and then I can sell this house..." The old woman's eyes started. Patricia got up. "Oh you know what I mean Mother, I mean Mother, I mean if you're going to live and the hospital and I'm at work all day why should we pay to keep up this big house? It's so hard to keep it clean Mother and it costs so much to heat it and I know what the house means to you but really Mother..." The old woman was crying. Patricia began to scream. "Listen to me listen to me. I am physically incapable of cleaning up after you, of vomiting over the smell of you, of listening to those inane television programs, of silence, of your damn baby food, and you, Mother, you, you, you, you. I can't stand your creaking wheel chair and your old old whitheredness. I've had it. I can't stand it any more. If I have to have this baby I'm going to have it by myself without the stink of oldness around me. Do you hear me Mother? Do you hear me?" The afghan had slipped from the old woman's knees exposing her white, blue veined legs beneath the short flannel gown. The old woman began to wheel the chair herself, agonizingly slowly, out of the room.

Somehow, when the men came the next day in the ambulance, Patricia managed to explain that the old woman would remain at home. When the ambulance slowly pulled away from the curb, it wasn't really a sense of relief she felt, but a sense of recognition, of yes it worked out as it had always worked out, as it always would work out. The way it had to be because the old woman was so pathetic Patricia thought. How do you push your own mother down the summer bright sidewalk and say bye mother as the strangers lift her into the ambulance, her face expressionless. You just can't, she thought, you just can't even though it was so hard, so hard.

The glaring heat of the summer; the saltiness of the concrete, of her skin, of window panes. Cottons now that had to be so large around the waist to make room for growing child. Sweat stained the back of her blouse; sweat beaded on her nose and upper lip as she changed the old woman's clothes, the bed, washed the dishes. Activity became more and more difficult as the summer whorled to its peak and decline. After the crabapples were put up in mason jars and the red containers lined the cupboards, after the sear of July, Patricia no longer left the house or the yard. She grew tired very easily, and the increasing weight of the child made it difficult for her to stand for long periods of time, either for iron- ing or massaging the old woman's back and legs. August and September tumbled into the ripeness and flow of October.

Autumn was too like tawny honey for sharp pointed accusations, ques-

tions, demands. Patricia felt the pull of the season and stopped her grating of the old woman. Honeyed autumn could not be decisive. And the old woman, deep in texture, felt a security return that had long since gone.

Patricia now began to pull herself up from chairs, and would almost smile when she couldn't see the steps because of her round stomach as she climbed from the chilly basement and the smell of onions and apples. In the night, still only teasingly cold, she had to lie on her side with a pillow supporting her stomach--to lie on her back was almost to suffocate with the child pressing down down down on her back through to the mattress. As she lay there, Patricia would spread her hands flat over her stomach to feel the contour of the child, to begin to know it. In the other room, the old woman would lie deep in medicated sleep, never moving under the weight of the blankets.

Fall with its rich golds and reds and the crunch of dry leaves and twigs. Ripe, full season, cycle complete.

The night of the first breathy barely frost, the child made its first push. At first paralyzed with fear, Patricia doubled over. After that first long hard push, she got up from the bed, made the necessary arrangements, and left the house to bring all to fruition. At the hospital, after a vaguely chilly ride, nothing but white lights and pushing tearing pain. Pushing pushing to push out and get over and end that which had begun, that which demanded an ending. Big deep breaths and finally with one last tremendous pain and push the orange pumpkin breaks from the vine of its own weight, and all the changes climax and focus upon one small dark wet head that breaks through to the new winter approaching. Pain of bringing forth ended.

Patricia enclosed with both arms the red wet body of the little girl handed to her. At first, only the glare of the white lights on the sticky little form with the kicking little legs, but soon the features of the little face, tiny, pinched, red, and it was only then, in that moment of introduction and recognition when mother looked upon child for the first time, when sweat drawn mother's face lay close to the wrinkled old woman face of the girl baby that the temperature gave one huge swoop, and it became winter.

Pausing

Lines bend at a touch

Leaving time to wallow in

The space of the curve.

CARRIE ANN SKIRLICK

The Child

MARIYA TRUSKOL

In the streaming light

Of moon and fireflies, the child

Does not want to sleep

Transition

MARIYA TRUSKOL

The red glow of the
sparkleberry spreads under
its winter blanket, and greets the sun
in cold-morning pink.

Winter

The cold winter night
Wakens golden morning lights
To mellow the frost.

MARIYA TRUSKOL